

Some Big Changes for 2008

Change is inevitable, except from vending machines

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This year has seen some significant changes in various areas, including the natural medicine industry and government departments (e.g. National Health Training Package Review, introduction of new guidelines for providers of vocational education and training courses). These have contributed to the need for changes in our courses and procedures at SAHEC.

While any change can be potentially challenging, I'm confident that the changes being introduced in 2008 will result in improved courses, more efficient processes and ultimately an even higher level of satisfaction for us all.

New Course Structures

Probably the biggest change to be introduced in 2008 is the change of course structures. These changes have largely been brought about due to the Review of the National Health Training Package for Complementary and Alternative Therapies and the resulting amendments and additions in the Health Training Package 2007.

The main difference to the Certificate IV and Diploma courses is that the new HLT07 courses are more streamlined. The Certificate IV in Massage is now called the Certificate IV in Massage Therapy Practice. This course represents the entry-level to professional massage practice and focuses largely on relaxation massage. It is now possible to complete the Certificate IV qualification in just 5 months! The HLT07 Diploma of Remedial Massage qualification can be completed in 11 months – that's including the Certificate IV in Massage Therapy Practice!!

There is now a Health Training Package qualification for a Diploma of Aromatherapy. Hence SAHEC's new course can now be completed within 10 months.

The Diploma of TCM Remedial Massage can also be completed within 8 months, and the Polarity Therapy Diploma has also been streamlined.

While there have not been too many changes to the Health Training Package qualifications for Naturopathy and Western Herbal Medicine, there is now a Health Training Package qualification for Nutrition. This is the Advanced Diploma of Nutritional Medicine and SAHEC will commence delivery of this course in 2008. Those of you who are currently in the process of completing your Advanced Diploma of Naturopathy or Western Herbal Medicine may be delighted to know that you will only need to complete two additional nutritional medicine modules (Advanced Nutritional Medicine 1, Advanced Nutritional Medicine 2) in order to receive this qualification in addition to your Naturopathy and Western Herbal Medicine awards.

Students currently enrolled in courses will generally complete those courses according to the structures/flow charts that have been in place in 2007. No alterations have been made to the existing Naturopathy and Western Herbal Medicine courses or the way they are delivered, except for Naturopathic Clinical Practice, which will be conducted in a more structured format to ensure that assessment of the Health Training Package competencies is effectively conducted.

Those students who are currently well on the way to completing their Certificate IV in Massage or Diploma of Remedial Massage course should complete their qualification according to the course structure they enrolled in. Students who complete the Certificate IV in Massage (old structure) and who wish to enrol in the Diploma of Remedial Massage (new structure) will gain module credits for electives they have completed which are listed in the Majors streams of the new course structure. This effectively means that a lot fewer modules will need to be completed to obtain the new Diploma of Remedial Massage qualification.

Any students who have completed only a few modules of either of these courses may benefit more from transferring to the new course structures.

If you are uncertain which option will be best for you, contact Student Services for assistance. Existing and new course structures/flow charts are available from Student Services. Pick up a copy of the course or courses of interest or relevance to you or visit the SAHEC website.

Semester and Block Timetables

In 2008 SAHEC's all courses will be delivered in either semesters or blocks, depending on whether you are studying the massage courses or the Naturopathy courses.

The Certificate and Diploma courses (Massage Therapy Practice, Remedial Massage, Aromatherapy, TCM Remedial Massage, Polarity Therapy) will be structured and delivered as study blocks. (e.g. Certificate IV Block A: 14 January – 23 May; Certificate IV Block B: 29 April – 5 September). You will be pleased to see that for 2008, timetables have been allocated for individual courses and, in the case of the Naturopathy course, for each year of study of the course. This should make it easier for you to identify when and where your modules are scheduled. Timetables are available from Student Services or the SAHEC website.

The Advanced Diploma courses (Naturopathy, Western Herbal Medicine, Nutritional Medicine) will be structured and delivered as semesters. There are two semesters per College year (Semester 1: 4 Feb – 4 July; Semester 2: 21 July – 12 December). Refer to the Year 2 and Year 3 timetables for Naturopathy.

We are also working towards consolidating the timetabling of courses so that full-time students are able to fulfil their study requirements over 3 days. While it has been possible to achieve this with the new course structures for 2008, 2nd and 3rd year Naturopathy students may still need to attend their classes over more than 3 days due to the existing course flow chart.

Enrolment and Re-enrolment Procedures

We have made some significant changes to the process of enrolling in courses and modules. These changes will enable SAHEC to provide more accurate reporting to the various government departments, including CentreLink.

From 2008, whether you are studying full-time or part-time, you will need to complete a re-enrolment form listing the modules that you wish to enrol in for the upcoming block or semester of study. Naturopathy students should note that they should re-enrol in the modules they intend studying only in semester 1 – not for the whole year (i.e. you will need to re-enrol in semester 2 modules after semester 1 has finished).

The current process of putting your name on a list for upcoming modules throughout the year will be discontinued. In order to commence study of any modules timetabled for a semester or block, it will be necessary to submit an enrolment form, together with a \$50 deposit per module (refer **Fees** below for details), prior to the start of that semester or block of study, listing the module/s you wish to study in that semester or block.

This procedure will better enable us to determine final class sizes earlier, so that any cancellations can be made before the commencement of the block or semester and cause less inconvenience to students and teaching staff.

Fees

Significant increases in interest rates, cost of living and inflation over the past twelve months has forced us to apply a slight increase to the cost of modules for 2008. However, we have kept this increase to a minimum and hope that you will find it to be acceptable.

Students enrolling in new courses will notice that a fee for clinic practicum will be introduced in 2008. Please see **Clinical Studies Modules** below for an explanation of how clinic practicum is now being delivered. Massage students currently completing their Certificate IV or Diploma qualification (i.e. in 2007) will be able to complete their PCP requirements under the conditions that existed when they commenced their current course. However deadlines apply. These have previously been announced and circulated, but are outlined again for your reference below (see **Massage Clinical Studies**).

To hopefully make things a little easier for you financially, we will provide a 5% discount on all modules that are paid for in full by the 19th December 2007.

Your attention is directed to changes in SAHEC's Module and Course Fee Policy. This incorporates the College's Cancellation/Refund policy and procedure. Please refer to SAHEC's website (Policies and Procedures) to download a copy or to the Policy and Procedures Noticeboard on Ground Level (between Classrooms 2 and 3). A hard copy is also available from Student Services for viewing.

Of particular importance is the introduction of a deposit/registration fee of \$50 per module. This deposit is part of the cost of the module. It is not an additional fee. The \$50 per module deposit must be paid at the time of enrolment (i.e. when you submit your re-enrolment form) and is required to secure your place in a class. Students' names will not be entered on the class list unless a re-enrolment form with relevant module/s deposit is lodged.

Students should finalise their balance of payment for the modules in which they have enrolled no later than 21 days prior to the commencement of the semester or block. Payment Arrangement Plans may be entered into where students are unable to pay the fees for their enrolled modules/course prior to the commencement of the semester or block. This should be arranged 21 days prior to the start of the semester or block.

Clinical Studies Modules

The clinical studies component (e.g. Professional Clinical Practice, Naturopathic Clinic Practicum) of natural medicine courses is arguably the most important. This is where students are required to integrate the essential knowledge and skills they have learned throughout the various modules of their course and apply them in a clinical setting to the treatment of clients.

The clinical studies modules provide students with an excellent opportunity to test their knowledge and skills in practice while under the supervision of a supervisor/teacher who can provide mentoring to enhance students' clinical skills prior to their graduation and establishment of a professional practice.

Furthermore, from the perspective of the National Health training Packages for Complementary and Alternative Therapies, the clinical studies modules are where students are actually assessed (in a clinical workplace setting) against the units of competency that comprise the Health Training Packages. Consequently the nature of the clinical studies component of all of SAHEC's courses is in the process of changing.

Whether in Massage or Aromatherapy, Naturopathy or Western Herbal Medicine, clinical studies is now being delivered as modules of study. Like other modules from SAHEC's courses, the new clinical studies modules will have specific aims, learning outcomes and assessment requirements. Assessment (against the Health Training Package competencies) will be an ongoing process. In each session of clinic students will be assessed against a checklist of competencies, by the supervisor, who will also provide feedback and mentoring.

By identifying any weak areas, areas for improvement, or non-competencies on a session-by-session basis, students have the opportunity to improve their skills and brush up on their essential knowledge so that they are competent in every aspect of clinical practice before they complete the clinical studies module/s.

This is a fairly major change to how clinical practice has previously been conducted. Students should gain much more from the clinical studies component of their course/s as a consequence and I am confident that the feedback, mentoring and greater interaction between the supervisor and the students will prove to be both enjoyable and fulfilling.

Massage Clinical Studies

The following dates apply to existing massage students who have clinical practice requirements to complete.

1. Modules, with clinic requirements, whose classes finished before 30 September 2007

All clinic hours requirements for modules whose classes finished before 30 September 2007 must be completed by 21 December 2007. This includes clinic reports where they are required. Any student unable to meet this requirement must make a written application for an extension and submit it to the Clinic Manager, Juliana Niemeier, for approval. Any applications for an extension must be submitted before 1 December 2007.

2. Modules with clinic requirements, whose classes finished after 30 September 2007 and before 21 December 2007

Modules where the final class is after 30 September 2007 and before 21 December 2007 must have their clinic hour requirements completed by the relevant dates tabled below. This includes clinic reports where they are required. Any student unable to meet this requirement must make a written application for an extension, stating reasons why an extension is needed, and submit it to the Clinic Manager, Juliana Niemeier, for approval. Any extension applications for the listed modules must be submitted no later than 3 weeks before the due dates.

Module	Last day of class	Clinic hrs must be completed by:	Clinic report due
LDM	12 Oct 07	21 Dec 07	7 Jan 08
PT2	12 Oct 07	21 Dec 07	7 Jan 08
SP1	24 Oct 07	7 Jan 08	No clinic report required
HM1	26 Oct 07	9 Jan 08	No clinic report required
SP2	6 Nov 07	15 Jan 08	29 Jan 08
TPT	9 Nov 07	18 Jan 08	1 Feb 08
PT3	9 Nov 07	18 Jan 08	1 Feb 08
FTR	11 Nov 07	21 Jan 08	No clinic report required
MYO	17 Nov 07	28 Jan 08	11 Feb 08
AR 2	23 Nov 07	4 Feb 08	18 Feb 08
RM1	29 Nov 07	11 Feb 08	25 Feb 08
TPT	2 Dec 07	18 Feb 08	3 March 08
RM2	6 Dec 07	22 Feb 08	7 March 08
AR3	14 Dec 07	22 Feb 08	7 March 08

3. PCP1 and PCP2

All students who commenced their PCP1 and PCP2 before 1 May 2007 must complete the required clinic hours for these (including clinic reports where required) before 21 December 2007. Any application for PCP1 or PCP2 extensions beyond this date must be made in writing, stating the reason why an extension is required. These should be submitted to the Clinic Manager, Juliana Niemeier before 1 December 2007.

Due to the new course structures commencing in 2008, all PCP1 and PCP2 clinic hours commenced before January 2008 must be completed before 19 April 2008. Any application for PCP1 or PCP2 extensions beyond this date must be made in writing, stating the reason why an extension is required. These should be submitted to the Clinic Manager, Juliana Niemeier before 1 March 2008.

Students who have not completed their clinic requirements by the due dates outlined above, or who have not received an approved extension, will be required to enroll in a Massage Clinical Studies module (MCS1 or MCS2) in order to complete their qualification. Fees apply for these Massage Clinical Studies modules.

HBA/Mutual Community Private Health Insurance for Naturopathy

It appears that Mutual Community has made a decision only to make provider numbers available to naturopaths with a Bachelor degree qualification. While this decision defies a rational explanation – other than the fact that it means Mutual Community will have to pay out a lot less in rebates – SAHEC naturopathy students do not need to worry!

You will still be able to receive a provider number from Mutual Community on the basis of your Advanced Diploma of Western Herbal Medicine qualification – and there is no deadline associated you're your application for a provider number.

HBA/Mutual Community appears to have also done a backflip on their policy relating to what type of Bachelor Degree qualification they accept for provision of a provider number. Previously I had been informed that they only accept a Bachelor of Naturopathy qualification. This meant that bridging courses to degree qualifications in complementary/natural therapies, such as those offered by Charles Sturt University, Victoria University and Southern Cross University, would not be acceptable to HBA/Mutual Community for provision of a provider number. But, while the HBA/Mutual Community website (which has now been updated) still states that a Bachelor of Naturopathy is required, I have now been informed by a representative of Mutual Community that they will accept one of these bridging course qualifications (even though they are not Bachelor of Naturopathy qualifications).

This matter highlights the lack of understanding that this particular health insurance company has of natural medicine modalities, natural medicine education or National Health Training Package benchmarks. I have informed HBA/Mutual Community of the fact that some bridging courses, such as the Charles Sturt University course, do not contain anything in their curriculum which furthers a naturopathic practitioner's knowledge or skills in their field of practice, and also that, like all other Private Health Insurance companies in Australia, they would be better to adopt the National Health Training Package qualification as their benchmark for provision of provider numbers.

ATMS is continuing to work towards convincing HBA/Mutual Community to adopt the Health Training Package Qualification (Advanced Diploma of Naturopathy) as their benchmark. Hopefully they will recognise the logic of that. However, in the mean time, you can rest assured that you are able to apply for, and receive, a provider number from Mutual Community on the basis of your Advanced Diploma of Western Herbal Medicine.

November 2007